

**What has come about the order of the *sūras* and *āyats* of the Qur'ān, its vowelling and dots, its *ḥizbs* and tens, the number of its letters, *juz*'s, words and *āyats***

Ibn at-Ṭayyib said, “Some say that the *Salaf* differed about the order of the *sūras* of the Qur'ān and some of them wrote the *sūras* in the order that they were revealed and put the Makkan before the Madinan, and some put *al-Ḥamd* (*Fātiḥa*) at the beginning, and others put *al-'Alaq* at the beginning. This was the case in the first copy of 'Alī. As for the copy of Ibn Mas'ūd, it begins with '*Master of the Day of the Dīn*' (1:4) and then *al-Baqara*, and then *an-Nisā'* with a different order. The copy of Ubayy began with *al-*

*Hamd*, then *an-Nisā'*, then *Āl 'Imrān*, then *al-An'ām*, then *al-A'rāf*, then *al-Mā'ida*. There were significant differences.”

Ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib's answer is that it is possible that the order of the *sūras* as we have today in the Qur'ān is by *ijtihād* on the part of the Companions. Makkī mentioned this in the *tafsīr* of *Sūrat at-Tawba*. He mentioned the order of the *āyats* in the *sūra* and that the placing the *basmala* at the beginnings of them was from the Prophet, peace be upon him. Since he did not command that for *Sūrat at-Tawba*, it was left without a *basmala*. This is the soundest of what is said about it.

In the *Jāmi'*, Ibn Wahb stated that Sulaymān ibn Bilāl heard Rabī'a being asked why *al-Baqara* and *Āl 'Imrān* were put first when there were about eighty *sūras* revealed before them and they were revealed in Madina. Rabī'a said, “They were put first and the Qur'ān was arranged according to the knowledge of those who arranged it and had knowledge of that. This is what we ended up with and we do not ask about it.” It is reported from Qatāda that Ibn Mas'ūd said, “Whoever of you seeks a model, should model himself on the Companions of the Messenger of Allah. They have the best hearts of this community, the deepest knowledge, least artifice, straightest guidance and the best state. Allah chose them to be the Companions of His Prophet and to establish His *dīn*. So acknowledge their excellence and follow in their footsteps. They followed straight guidance.”

Some scholars say that the arrangement of the *sūras* of the Qur'ān which we find in our copies of the Qur'ān was at the instruction of the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace. What is related about the differences between the copies of Ubayy, 'Alī and 'Abdullāh was before the final presentation. The Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, arranged those *sūras* for them after they had done that. It is reported from Ibn Wahb that he heard Mālik say, “The Qur'ān was arranged according to what they heard from the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace.”

Al-Anbārī mentioned in *Kitāb ar-Radd*, “Allah Almighty revealed the Qur'ān all at once to the lowest heaven, and then it

came down in parts to the Prophet over twenty years. A *sūra* would be revealed about a matter which happened and an *āyat* would answer an inquiry. Jibrīl would give the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the place of the *sūra* and the *āyat*. So the *sūras* are in order as the *āyats* and letters are in order. All of it is from Muḥammad, the Seal of the Messengers, peace be upon him, from the Lord of the Worlds. Whoever changes the order of the *sūras* is like someone who invalidates the order of the *āyats* and changes the letters and the words. There is no argument against the people who possess the truth in putting *al-Baqara* before *al-An‘ām* when *al-An‘ām* was revealed before *al-Baqara* because the order is taken from the Messenger of Allah. He said, “Put this *sūra* in such-and-such a place.”

Al-Barā’ said, “The last of the Qur’ān to be revealed was, ‘They will ask you for a fatwā. Say: “Allah gives you a fatwā about people who die without direct heirs.”’” (4:176). Abū Bakr ibn ‘Ayyāsh said, “Abū Ishāq erred because it is reported from Ibn ‘Abbās that the last part of the Qur’ān to be revealed was, ‘Show fear of a Day when you will be returned to Allah. Then every self will be paid in full for what it earned. They will not be wronged’ (2:281). Jibrīl told the Prophet, peace be upon both of them, ‘Muḥammad, put it as the beginning of 281 of *al-Baqara*.’”

Ibn Baṭṭāl said, “Whoever says this, does not say that the recitation of the Qur’ān in the prayer and lessons must be in the order that it is in copies of the Qur’ān. Rather it is only mandatory to put the *sūras* in order when writing them down, and it is not known that any of them said that the same order is mandatory in the prayer, in recitation of the Qur’ān and study or that it is not lawful for someone to learn *al-Kahf* before *al-Baqara* or *al-Ḥajj* before *al-Kahf*. Do you not see that ‘Ā’isha told the person who asked about this, ‘There is nothing wrong in whichever you recite first. The Prophet used to recite one *sūra* in a *rak‘at* and then would recite in the next *rak‘at* a different *sūra* than the one that follows it.’

As for what is reported from Ibn Mas‘ūd and Ibn ‘Umar about it being disliked to recite the Qur’ān out of order, claiming that it

upsets the heart, what they meant by that was reciting the *sūra* out of order and beginning from its end and then working backwards, because that is forbidden. Some people do this with the Qur'ān and poetry to subject the tongue to that and facilitate memorisation. Allah forbade doing this in the Qur'ān because it disorders His *sūras* and is counter to what He meant by it.”

Part of what indicates that it is not obliged to use the chronological order of revelation in copies of the Qur'ān is that it is confirmed that certain *āyats* were revealed in Madina and then placed in Makkan *sūras*. 'Ā'isha said, “*Sūrat al-Baqara* and *Sūrat an-Nisā'* were revealed when I was with him (i.e. in Madina), but they come in the copies of the Qur'ān before earlier *sūras* of the Qur'ān revealed in Makka.”

## Section

As for the vowelling of the Qur'ān and its dots, it is reported that 'Abdu'l-Mālīk ibn Marwān commanded them to be added, and that was undertaken by al-Ḥajjāj in Wāsiṭ. He worked on the task and added its *ḥizbs*. He commanded the governor of Iraq, al-Ḥasan, and Yaḥyā ibn Ya'mur to do that. After that he wrote a book in Wāsiṭ on the readings in which he compiled what was related about the disagreement of people in relation to the script. People used that book for a long time until Ibn Mujāhid wrote his book on the readings. In *Kitāb at-Ṭabaqāt* az-Zubaydī quotes al-Mubarrad as saying that the first person to use dots in the Qur'ān was Abū'l-Aswad ad-Du'alī. Ibn Sīrīn also mentioned that he had a copy of the Qur'ān in which Yaḥyā ibn Ya'mur had put the dots.

## Section

As for the position regarding the division of the Qur'ān into groups of ten *āyats*, Ibn 'Aṭiyya said, “In one of the histories I read that the 'Abbāsīd al-Ma'mūn commanded that to be done. It is also

said that al-Ḥajjāj did it.” In the *Kitāb al-Bayān*, ad-Dānī said that ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd disliked the marking of tens in the copies of the Qur’ān and that he erased them. Mujāhid is reported to have disliked the tenths in copies of the Qur’ān.

Ashhab said, “I heard Mālik being asked about the tens which are in the Qur’ān in red and other colours and he disliked that, saying, ‘There is nothing wrong in marking the tens with [normal] ink.’ He was asked about copies of the Qur’ān in which the ends of *sūras* were written along with the number of *āyats* in every *sūra*. He said, ‘I dislike for anything [additional] to be written or vowelled in the master copies. As for those copies by which children learn, I see no harm in doing that.’” Ashhab said, “Then he produced for us a copy of the Qur’ān which had belonged to his grandfather. He had written it when ‘Uthmān had the Qur’ān copied out. We saw the ends were written in ink in something resembling a chain which extended for an entire line and I saw that the *āyats* had diacritical marks in ink.”

Qatāda said, “They began with the dots, then with marking the division of the fives and then the tens.” Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr said, “The Qur’ān was bare in the original copies and the first thing that they did was to put dots on the *bā’*, *tā’* and *thā’*. They said, ‘There is nothing wrong in it. It makes it clearer.’ Then they put dots at the ends of *āyats* and then they put openings and ends of *sūras*.”

Abū Ḥamza said, “Ibrāhīm an-Nakhā‘ī noticed in my copy of the Qur’ān the opening of such-and-such a *sūra*. He said to me, ‘Erase it. ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd said, “Do not mix with the Book of Allah something which is not part of it.”’” Abū Bakr as-Sarrāj said, “I asked Abū Rāzin, ‘Do I write ‘*Sūra* such-and-such’ in my copy of the Qur’ān?’ He replied, ‘I fear that people will come who do not know it and think that those words are part of the Qur’ān.’”

Ad-Dānī said, “All these reports which allow the marking of tens and fives and beginnings of *sūras* and the beginnings of *āyats* say that it was done by the Companions whose *ijtihād* led them to that. I think that those of them who objected to that objected to the use of colours like red, yellow and so forth, although the Muslims in other areas agreed on their use in the master copies and other

copies, and prohibition and error were removed from them in what they agreed upon, Allah willing.

## Section

As for the number of its letters and *juz*'s, Sallām al-Ḥimānī said, "Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf gathered the reciters, *ḥuffāz* and scribes and said, 'Tell me how many letters are in the entire Qur'ān.' I was one of that group. We calculated and agreed that the Qur'ān had three hundred and forty thousand, seven hundred and forty (340,740) letters. Then he said, 'Tell me which letter ends half of the Qur'ān.' It was in *al-Kahf*, on the *fā*' of *wa layatalattaf* [18:19, 'he should go about with caution.'] He said, 'Tell me the thirds.' The first third was found to be at the beginning of 9:100 and the second at the beginning of 26:100 or 101. The last third was the rest of the Qur'ān. He said, 'Tell me the sevenths of the letters.' We did so."

Sallām, Abū Muḥammad, stated, "We did that over four months. Every night al-Ḥajjāj would read a fourth. The end of the first fourth was at the end of *al-An'ām*, the second in *al-Kahf*, the third at the end of *az-Zumar* and the fourth consisted of the rest. This is contrary to what is mentioned by ad-Dānī in *Kitāb al-Bayān*.

## Section

As for the number of the *āyats* of the Qur'ān in the first Madinan copy, Muḥammad ibn 'Īsā said, "The number of the *āyats* of the Qur'ān in the first Madinan copy was six thousand." Abū 'Amr said, "It is the number related by the people of Kufa from the people of Madina, and they did not name anyone specifically on whom they relied in that."

As for the final Madinan copy, according to Ismā'īl ibn Ja'far, it has six thousand two hundred and fourteen (6214) *āyats*. Al-Faḍl

said, “The number of the *āyats* of the Qur’ān according to the Makkans was six thousand two hundred and nineteen (6219). That is the number related by Sālim and al-Kisā’i from Ḥamza. Al-Kisā’i attributed it to ‘Alī.” Muḥammad said, “The number of the *āyats* of the Qur’ān according to the Basrans was six thousand two hundred and four (6204), which is the number which their *Salaf* passed down. As for the number of the people of Syria, Yaḥyā ibn al-Ḥārith adh-Dhamārī said it was six thousand two hundred and twenty-six (6226). One transmission has six thousand two hundred and twenty-five (6225).” Ibn Dhakwān said, “I think that Yaḥyā did not count the *basmala*.”

As for the number of its words, al-Faḍl ibn Shādhān said, “The total number of the words of the Qur’ān according to ‘Aṭā’ ibn Yasār is seventy-seven thousand four hundred and thirty-nine (77,439) and its letters are three hundred and twenty-three thousand and fifteen (323,015).” This differs from what al-Ḥimānī said. Ibn Kathīr reported that Mujāhid said, “This is what we counted of the Qur’ān: it has three hundred and twenty-one thousand, one hundred and eighty (321,180) letters. This also differs from what al-Ḥimānī mentioned.